

# Veterans Town Hall

Alfred Montoya, Jr. - Director  
April 12, 2021



*A Legacy of Service. The Future of Care.*

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



# Agenda

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- **Opening Remarks**
- **VA New England Healthcare System (VISN 1) Update**
- **VA Regional Office Hartford Update**
- **SAVE LIVES Act**
  - Expansion of COVID-19 vaccine eligibility
- **American Recovery Plan**
  - Co-payment debts canceled/refunded
- **Operational Update**
- **Announcements**
- **Questions**



# Mr. Ryan Lilly, MPA

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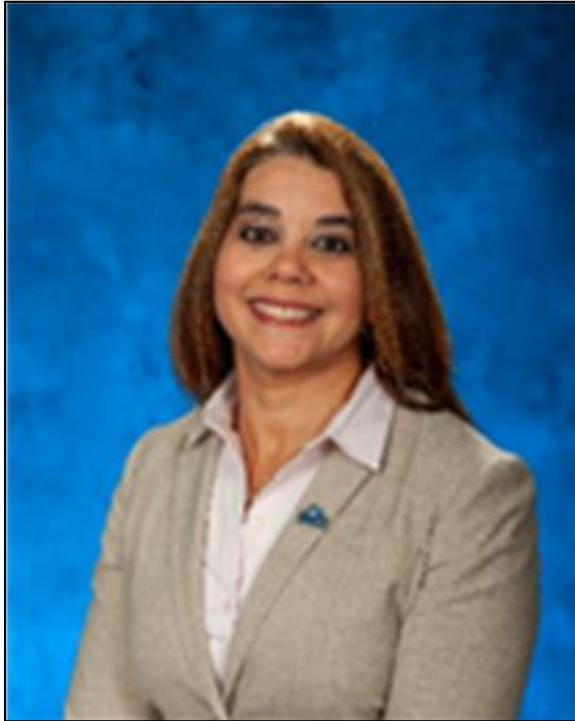


- Director of the VA New England Healthcare System (VISN 1) since September 2018.
- Executive oversight of the 8 VA medical centers, 35 community-based outpatient clinics, 6 nursing homes, two domiciliaries in New England with an operating budget in excess of \$2.7 billion.
- Previously, Director of the VA Maine Healthcare System.



# Astrid Perez – Director, Hartford VA Regional Office

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## Regional Office Reopening Status

- RO in-person hours (by appointment): 8:30am to 2:30pm Monday-Friday.
- In-person benefit service appointment must be scheduled in advance: **860-666-7342**
  - Veterans that arrive without an appointment will be asked to schedule an appointment but will be seen if there is capacity to do so.
- In person or phone assistance is available for inquiries, claims assistance, forms or letter requests.
- Offering in-person & virtual hearings.
- Office is prioritizing and adhering to safety guidelines:
  - All employees, visitors, and contractors wishing to access VBA spaces will be required to participate in screening when entering the VA Medical Center.
  - All visitors required to wear a mask per VA guidelines.



# Alfred Montoya, Jr. – Director, VA Connecticut Healthcare System

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- Appointed October 2019.
- Served 10 years in the U.S. Air Force (Russian Cryptologic Linguist).
- Previously served as Director of VA Medical Centers in White River Junction (Vermont) and Manchester (New Hampshire).
- Joined VA in 2009.



# HR 1276 Key Points

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On Wednesday, March 24, 2021, President Biden signed into law H.R. 1276, the “Strengthening and Amplifying Vaccination Efforts to Locally Immunize All Veterans and Every Spouse Act or the SAVE LIVES Act,” which expands VA’s authority to provide COVID-19 vaccinations.

Additional Veterans not currently eligible for enrollment in VA’s health care system, including Veterans without compensable service-connected disabilities and Veterans who have incomes above a certain threshold.

Caregivers of Veterans who are enrolled in various VA home-based and long-term care programs

Spouses of Veterans

CHAMPVA recipients (spouses of permanently and totally disabled Veterans or of Veterans who have died from service-connected disabilities)



# Status of COVID-19 Vaccinations (as of April 6)

22,681 first doses to Veterans.

Based on our 70% vaccination goal of 34,251, we're at 66.21% of that goal.

**On April 7, we hit 50,000 cumulative doses.**

Employees - 2,907 1<sup>st</sup> doses

Employees - 2,811 2<sup>nd</sup> doses

**96.3% of employees have completed both vaccines**





# Upcoming COVID 19 Vaccine Clinics

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Most current information is posted on the facility Facebook and Internet pages:  
[www.facebook.com/VACconnecticut](https://www.facebook.com/VACconnecticut) & [www.connecticut.va.gov](http://www.connecticut.va.gov)

**April 13 from 8am-3:30pm**

Newington campus, 555 Willard Avenue, Bldg. 2E basement (Johnson and Johnson)

**April 14-16 from 8am-3:30pm**

West Haven campus, 950 Campbell Avenue, Donaldson Center, Bldg. 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (Pfizer)

**April 15 from 8am-3:30pm**

Newington campus, 555 Willard Avenue, Bldg. 2E basement (Moderna)

**April 17 from 8am-4pm**

Harding High School, 379 Bond Street, Bridgeport (Johnson and Johnson)

**April 19-21 from 8am-3:30pm**

West Haven campus, 950 Campbell Avenue, Donaldson Center, Bldg. 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (Pfizer)



# American Recovery Plan

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VA co-payment debts  
canceled and refunded.

Veterans receiving a refund do not need to  
do anything right now.

We ask for your patience as we work to  
cancel copayments and process refunds.





# American Recovery Plan

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## **VA co-payment debts canceled and refunded.**

If you're a Veteran who receives care through VA, here's what this means for you:

- If you received a patient statement in January 2021 that included copayments for services received on or after April 6, 2020, those charges will be canceled. You should not pay them.
- If you already paid your copayments for services received on or after April 6, 2020, you will receive a refund.
- If you have unpaid copayments for services received prior to April 6, 2020, your payment is not required or expected to be paid until October 2021. VA will not pursue collection action on charges during this time. Veterans who prefer to continue making payments on their balances for services prior to April 6, 2020 may do so.



# Construction Update

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## **New London Clinic:**

- Under construction (design not fully complete)
- Estimated construction completion: Summer 2021 with activation to follow.
  - Furniture ordered with mid-July delivery date
  - IT equipment order pending receipt of final electrical design from contractor

## **Sterile Processing Service Relocation**

- Design is at 20% - working on space requirements for impacted services.
  - Overall design completion planned for October 2021.
- Based on design completion, contracting timelines and estimated construction duration, estimated construction completion is Winter 2023.



# Construction Update

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## **Surgical and Clinical Tower**

- In Project Book Phase (development of project-specific requirements)
  - Project Book completion expected in August 2021
- Estimated timelines:
  - Design contract award – December 2021
  - Design completion – July 2023
  - Construction contract awarded – February 2024
  - Construction completed – December 2028

## **Parking Garage (West Haven Campus)**

- Overall design completion estimated for September 2021
- Estimated construction completion is Fall 2023



# Plan Forward

Return to more face-to-face appointments

Inpatient visitation

Main entrance screening

Volunteer opportunities

Special events/group activities



Stamford Clinic



Waterbury Clinic



Winsted Clinic



Danbury Clinic



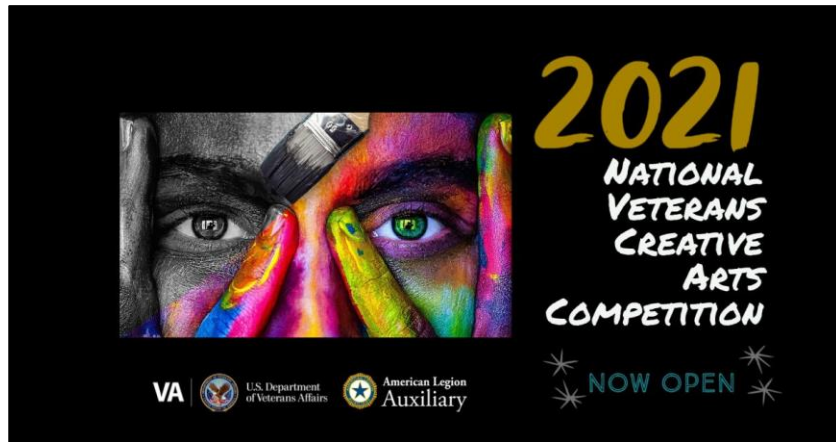
New London Clinic



Willimantic Clinic



# Creative Arts Competition



Information will be posted to the facility  
Internet page:

<https://www.connecticut.va.gov/> and  
<https://www.facebook.com/VAConnecticut>

**Competition is open to veterans enrolled for care with VA.**

Open to work completed after April 1, 2020.

**Visual arts** submissions (fine art, applied art and kits) deadline is June 30. The online exhibit will be in September.

- Veterans can submit up to three pieces of artwork (must be in three different categories).
- For more information, contact **Kim Heil** at 203-932-5711 ext. 5766.

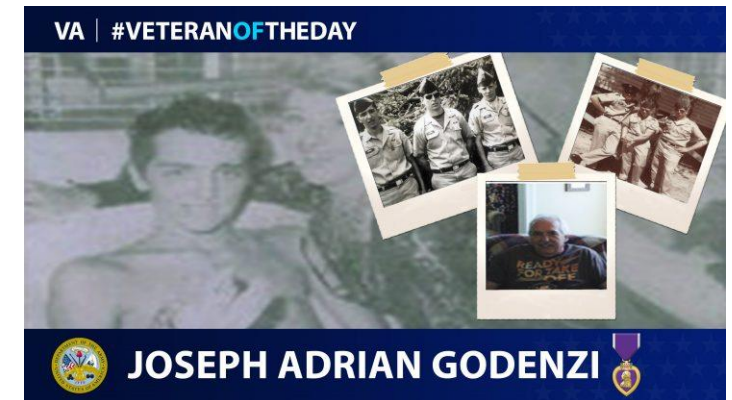
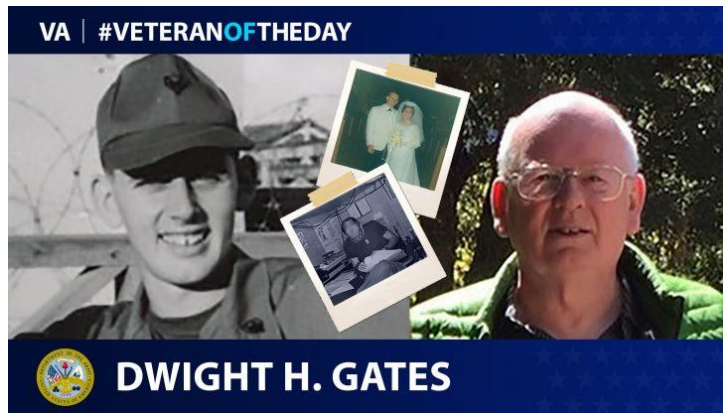
## **Performing Arts and Creative Writing**

- Categories include music, dance and drama performances.
  - For more information contact **Sarah Pitts** at ext. 4051
- Creative writing includes poetry and short stories.
  - Deadline is June 2021.
  - For more information, contact **Stephanie O'Keefe** at ext. 3051 or **Mary Baker** at ext. 5019 (main number 203-932-5711)



# Nominate a Veteran for #VeteranOfTheDay

Want to recognize a special Veteran or highlight your own military service? Consider submitting to VA's #VeteranOfTheDay social media feature. You submit the photos/information and VA will create the collage.



<https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82638/how-to-submit-for-veteranoftheday/>



# Veteran of the Day – National VA Social Media

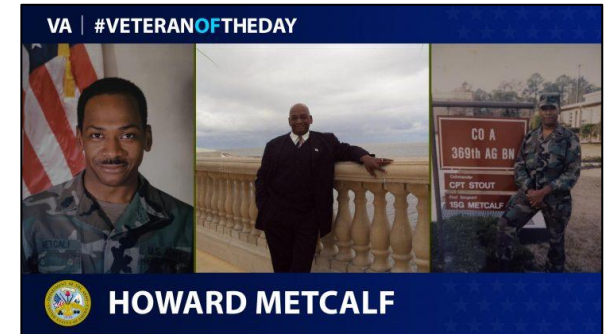
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For photos, send the following:

- 3-5 original, high-resolution and in-focus photos in .jpg format. At least one of these photos should be in uniform. Do not send .pdf files, screen shots or photos of photos. We need the best photos to create a graphic worthy of honoring the Veteran.
- When sending photos, please avoid anything that would constitute endorsement of a product.

In an email or a Word document, please send the following:

- Name, branch, job and years of service.
- Include all assignments, deployments and campaigns.
- Please note any notable awards, such as a Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart or higher.
- Please send any interesting anecdotes about the Veteran's service and what the Veteran is doing now.
- If the Veteran passed away, please indicate that information. If the person is buried in a national cemetery, please let us know the [Veteran Legacy Memorial page](#) so we can include that link.



Send all the material to [newmedia@va.gov](mailto:newmedia@va.gov)



# How to contact us

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**West Haven Campus: (203) 932-5711**

**Newington Campus: (860) 666-6951**

**(Medical) Appointment Call Center: (866) 808-7921**

**VA COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics: (203) 932-5711 ext. 5627, 7784 or 7754**

**VA Regional Office Hartford Benefit Service Appointment Line: 860-666-7342**

**VA Regional Office Hartford Main Line: 1-800-827-1000**

## **Internet**

<https://www.connecticut.va.gov/>

## **Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/VACConnecticut>

**National VA site to sign up for COVID-19 vaccines & more information**

<https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/stay-informed>



# Type your questions in the chat

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